



PCT Education Services  
Positive Progression for All

# Missing from Education

Date policy approved	August 2022	
Next review date.	August 2023	
Approved by: Headteacher	Sally Alden	
Approved by: Governor	Michael Millage	

### **Standard Statement Aim:**

PCT Education Services ensures to maintain a culture in which children rarely go missing, and if they do, they return quickly and ensures that children who do go missing are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return.

### **Introduction**

The Headteacher ensures that there is a strong emphasis and value on making positive relationships with children and young people, promoting positive choices. This will provide a firm bedrock upon which to develop and promote the building of resilience and self-confidence. The school provides a clear consistent message to all involved that they are valued and important, and belong to our school.

In developing our ethos, and creating an environment in which children / young people can feel secure and safe, we are attempting to minimise the risk of children / young people going missing.

### **Underpinning Ethos / Practice**

An essential part of PCT Education Services is its ethos and values; to actively enable children / young people to understand the risks and dangers involved in running away or going missing. The Executive Headteacher ensures this ethos is evidenced across our provision, so staff and students can identify how to stay safe and know there are procedures in place to keep them safe. Students are supported and have daily routines and boundaries; they are aware of how to seek help and once students are settled, they enjoy school, as we promote an environment that students feel part of and valued.

In many instances running away or going missing can be prevented by staff adopting a proactive approach. Staff should be acutely aware of, and familiar with, individual triggers and group dynamics. They should recognise the benefits of using activities to positively engage with young people which will help in gaining an insight into what will work with each young person to deter them from going missing.

The Behaviour Management section of the Behaviour Policy identifies individualised strategies that are relevant for each child / young person in an attempt to stop them running away or going missing. These plans and procedures should be as comprehensive and wide-ranging as possible.

It is not acceptable for staff to do nothing. They must be aware that they have a duty of care to stop a child / young person from leaving the school where it can be evidenced they would be putting themselves at immediate risk. An example of this would be getting into an unknown's waiting car outside the school (staff must not use any method of preventing a child / young person from leaving the school that would, as a result, affect or be imposed upon, other children / young people at the school). An example of this would be temporarily locking the door when other children / young people are in the school.

### **On discovering that a child is missing during the school day, the following procedures will be followed:**

- Headteacher/safeguarding lead will be informed and an incident form opened with the time recorded of where and when the child was last seen.
- Parents/Carers will be informed immediately.
- The support staff will go into the community and actively look for the student.
- Classmates and friends will be asked of the child's whereabouts, and any relevant information noted and where and when the child was last seen.
- Verification with the appropriate teacher/teaching assistant and register.
- Check with the school records for any further information from telephone enquiries.

- Check if the child is on a care order or are deemed to be in danger from parental contact.
- A thorough search of the school premises will be organised and coordinated by the child protection person.
- A search will be conducted within 20mins of the initial report of absence. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will extract personal files on the child, and a recent photograph, if available. 20mins is a general term as some more vulnerable students may need action sooner, refer to ILL Plans.
- After 20 minutes, the police will be informed along with the Norfolk/Suffolk Children Safeguarding Board if appropriate.
- Parents/carers or the person with parental responsibility will be updated,
- The school will cooperate fully with any investigations. The Headteacher will then inform the Chair of Governors to support best practice and modify policies where appropriate.

**A full list of rules on being missing from school is visible within school, helping students know the consequences and to promote them making positive choices. (Appendix 1)**

### **If a child goes missing while off-site of school premises:**

Staff will stay with student/s while off-site, using school mobile phones to coordinate with the school. Should a child go out of sight from a member of staff, that child will instantly be considered as missing from education, and the following procedure will take place:

- An immediate headcount will be carried out to ensure that all the other children are present.
- An adult will search the immediate vicinity.
- The remaining children will be taken back to school.
- Inform the Headteacher and/or Safeguarding Lead by mobile phone.
- The School will ring the child's parents/ carers or person responsible for them and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion.
- The School will ask the parent/carer to come to the venue or the school at once.
- If at a venue, contact the off-site venue Manager and arrange a search.
- If not found in 20 minutes, Contact the Police.
- The Safeguarding Lead would inform the Norfolk/Suffolk Children Safeguarding Board if appropriate.
- The school will cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.
- An incident report and written documentation will be fed back to the Chair of Governors.

Children / young people must feel welcomed back into school following a period of being missing. They must see that staff are relieved they are back and keen to ensure they are safe and well, and that they react swiftly to any medical/extra attention needed. Staff must offer the child / young person something to eat and a warm drink.

### **Monitoring / Review**

The School must maintain a central record of all incidents of children / young people who go missing as well as with a more detailed version that is kept in each child / young person's file.

An enhanced Individual Risk Assessment and the students' Behaviour Management Plan will be updated, and a plan will be agreed to avoid it happening again. A professionals meeting, including parents/carers, will be sought to establish a way forward using Keeping Children Safe in Education legislation 2022 to enable an inclusive curriculum for the student concerned.

The Headteacher will ensure that monthly and quarterly monitoring of individual children / young people and outcomes assessed are completed.

An incident form will feed into the new curriculum programme. This will allow individual targets to be set and one to one work as well as group lessons, helping to address barriers and to prevent future incidents.

### **Absent from school**

Student's attendance is recorded daily. If a student is absent, the school secretary contacts home before 10.30 am to establish the reason for absence and to reassure the school that the student is safe. If we have not heard from the parent/carer by lunchtime the secretary will keep trying to make contact. If the school does not hear from the parents or the student by the end

of the day, then a home visit will take place that afternoon. Attendance percentages are shared with professionals and parents to maximise inclusion; please see Admissions and Attendance Policy in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 for further guidance.

Action plans will be drawn up, and our enrichment team will be available for parents/carers to help students attend school regularly. Patterns of students being away from school are studied to help address issues both at home and at school.